

**OKLAHOMA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE
(OCCASA) PROGRAM JUDICIAL DISTRICT 7
ANNUAL REPORT
2002-2003**

The Oklahoma County Court Appointed Special Advocate (OCCASA) Program has been training community volunteers and serving children in Oklahoma County for the last 15 years. Chronically faced with the growing problem of juvenile delinquency, detention overcrowding and an ever-increasing deprived population, the Judges and the Board of County Commissioners have overwhelmingly supported the use of volunteers. At the conclusion of FY 02-03, the number of community volunteers trained to advocate best interest issues on behalf of our deprived children over the past 15 years, reached 500. Further supporting our mission, the implementation of the Juvenile Bureau's not for profit board, the Citizens for Juvenile Justice (CJJ), has heightened public awareness with regard to the problems plaguing our youth and community since 1992.

*CASA staff worked with and/or supervised 176 volunteers (includes CJJ/CASA board members) throughout the FY '02-03. Efforts from these community leaders and dedicated citizens have provided approximately 8,696 hours of personal service to our youth, their families and our community. Volunteer hours equate to an approximate SAVING of \$128,962 to Oklahoma County. While both populations of volunteers shared the common goals of providing services to at-risk youth, and increasing community awareness about juvenile issues, each serves a specific purpose to meet the distinct needs of the court involved youth in our community.

THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) PROGRAM:

A growing nationwide movement, trained volunteers known as CASAs have been speaking for the best interest of the abused and neglected children in the courtroom for 25 years. In 1977, taking a risk, a Seattle Judge promoted and implemented an innovative common sense approach for children's advocacy. In 1974 the federal Child Abuse and Treatment Act (CAPTA) mandated the appointment of a Guardian Ad litem in all juvenile proceedings. Using CAPTA, Judge Soukup theorized that a "volunteer" Guardian Ad Litem, whose sole focus was the best interest of the child, could positively impact the deprived case and its progression through the system. In general, CASAs conduct an objective investigation (1) through personal interviews and review of all pertinent records; (2) seeking out alternate community resources and services, if necessary; (3) facilitating communication between parties in the case; (4) submitting written reports and recommendations to the Court; (5) appearing at Court proceedings; (6) permanency planning; and, (7) monitoring each case until it has been dismissed. In response to the need, according to the 2002 National CASA Association (**NCASAA**) Survey, 70,130 volunteers contributed 9,887,640 hours to give a voice to 279,160 children

Established in 1987, Oklahoma County's CASA Program (OCCASA) operates under the umbrella of the Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau (OCJB) at the discretion of the Court and the Oklahoma County Board of County Commissioners. OCCASA has trained **500 CASAs** who have served **1,875 children** in **810 cases** since graduating its first class of volunteers in the spring of 1988. Statutorily mandated in each of the 26 Judicial Districts, the courts are given the authority to appoint CASA volunteers to deprived cases through the Oklahoma State Statutes, Title 10, Section 7003.37 of the Oklahoma Children's Code. Currently there are 24 recognized programs throughout the state of Oklahoma.

4 and 6 YEAR ANNUAL COMPARISONS

	TOTAL VOLUNTEERS ASSIGNED THROUGHOUT FY	VOLUNTEERS ASSIGNED ENDING 6-30	TOTAL CHILDREN SERVED	# NEW CHILDREN SERVED	TOTAL CASES ASSIGNED
FY 97		94	281		
FY 98	133	84	331	165	123
FY 99	139	87	487	156	191
FY 00	130	96	497	158	192
FY 01	128	102	533	146	214
FY 02	149	101	524	131	201
FY 03	167	135	621	261	244

Keeping with program goals set during FY 01-02, OCASA significantly increased its' pool of active volunteers and the average number of appointed volunteers throughout the fiscal year. At the end of FY '03, of the 207 total volunteers, an average of 120 volunteers were active monthly compared to FY 02's average of 96. **Throughout the year, 167 CASAs gave an estimated total of *8611 hours to 621 children in 244 cases.** This is an average of 72 hours per volunteer annually, **6 hours monthly**, compared to the NCASAA average of 80 hours across program type. Of the 8,611 hours, an average of **29 volunteers reported an average of 17.22 hours per month for a documented 5,995 hours.** This is down from last year's average of 20.80 hours per month per volunteer reporting. **Estimated hours** are based on **an average of 2.66 hours** per month per volunteer not reporting. (This estimated number has been dramatically reduced from 10 hours/month to the 2.66; therefore, skewing the ability for annual comparisons.) The average number of children per case in FY '02 was 2.54. This average remains almost static with previous years.

Volunteer Training Comparisons

	<i>VOLUNTEERS TRAINED</i>	<i>TOTAL VOLS Avail Ending FY</i>
FY 98-99 Actual	41	101
FY 99-00 Actual	31	116
FY 00-01 Actual	40	128
FY 01-02 Actual	38	149
FY 02-03 Actual	82	207

	<i>TOTAL CASES ASSIGNED</i>	<i>NEW CASE ASSIGNMENTS</i>	<i>CHILDREN SERVED</i>	<i>BASIC TRAINING (30hr EACH)</i>	<i>IN-SERVICE HOURS</i>
FY 98-99 Act.	191	66	487	3X PER YR	18
FY99-00 Act.	192	64	497	3 X PER YR	* 39
FY 00-01 Act.	214	67	533	year round	* 42
FY 01-02 Act.	201	48	524	year round	*114
FY 02-03 Act.	244	107	621	year round	

***NOTE: The hours specified are the combined hours offered by OCCASA and hours available in the community of which notice was given to volunteers. Of those hours offered, those provided specifically by the OCCASA office were 9, 18 and 4 during the respective years. The significant number of hours available in the community were such that CASA simply could not compete with the quality or quantity. A vast majority of hours were free or available at a very low cost to participants.**

CASA Volunteers come from diverse ethnic, educational and professional backgrounds. The average volunteer is a white female between the ages of 35-64 years of age. Throughout the year, volunteers have indicated family problems, illness, work, school, and most significantly, frustration with the system as reasons for going inactive temporarily or permanently. Based on National Standards and current staffing levels, Oklahoma County is in a position to oversee up to 155 active volunteers.

GENDER:	VOLUNTEERISM		TOTAL (ENDING JUNE 30)
	MALES	FEMALES	
FY 97-98	16 (15%)	85 (84%)	101
FY 98-99	15 (14%)	98 (89%)	110
FY 99-00	16 (14%)	100 (86%)	116
FY 00-01	25 (20%)	103 (80%)	128
FY 01-02	34 (23%)	115 (77%)	149
FY 02-03	39 (19%)	168 (81%)	207

ETHNIC BACKGROUND (ending June 30):

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other
FY 97-99	82 (81%)	16 (16%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0
FY 98-99	91 (83%)	17 (15%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0
FY 00-99	106 (91%)	10 (09%)	0	0	
FY 00-01	113 (88%)	13 (10%)	2 (2%)	0	
FY 01-02	136 (92%)	11 (7%)	2 (1%)	0	
FY 02-03	191 (92%)	11 (5%)	2 (1%)	0	3 (2%)
'01 NCASAA SURVEY:	82.1%	10.6 %	4.7%	1.4 %	3.2%
'02 NCASAA SURVEY:	82.9%	9.9%	3.5%	1.0%	2.7%

NEW VOLUNTEERS TRAINED

FY 96-97	23
FY 97-98	26
FY 98-99	41
FY 99-00	31
FY 00-01	40
FY 01-02	38
FY 02-03	82

OCCASA's increased recruitment efforts and year-round training has proven fruitful allowing for the training and swearing in of **82 new volunteers during one 12 month period compared to 78 in an 18 month period**. During the two year period since the converting to a year-round training curriculum, **over 298 application packets** were requested and mailed out to prospective volunteers. During FY 02-03 alone, contact was made with 307 prospective volunteers.

In accordance with plans to refocus recruitment efforts the following changes were made:

	Press Releases	# Speaker Bureau Presentations /audience count	TV Interviews	Radio Spanish	Radio	Radio PSAs
2002	49	15/280 people	2	0	0	0
2003	29	23/447 people	2	1	1	16

Additionally, the regional adoption of CASA by the Kiwanis has afforded CASA the spotlight in front of approximately 1700 people this year.

CASAs serve the abused and neglected (deprived) children of this community on a case by case basis. In child welfare cases, the intervention of a CASA Volunteer provides much needed information to the judge who is responsible for setting and "repeatedly adjusting the direction for state intervention on behalf of each abused and neglected child. These decisions encompass not only the issues of custody, placement, and visitation, but also, in many states, the case plan for the child, including exactly which services dare to be provided to the child and family."

CHILDREN SERVED

GENDER:	MALE	FEMALE	Total
FY 96-97	135 (48.04%)	146 (51.96%)	281
FY 97-98	173 (52.27%)	158 (47.73%)	331
FY 98-99	249 (51.13%)	238 (48.87%)	487
FY 99-00	268 (53.92%)	229 (46.08%)	497
FY 00-01	270 (50.66%)	263 (49.34%)	533
FY 01-02	274 (52.49%)	250 (47.71%)	524
FY 02-03	316 (50.89%)	305 (49.11%)	621
%Statewide			
FY 97-98	6,548 (48.05%)	7,079 (51.95%)	13,627
FY 98-99	<i>BREAKDOWN NOT AVAILABLE</i>		16,710
FY 99-00	7,938 (48.95%)	8,277 (51.05%)	16,217
FY 00-01	6,925 (48.52%)	7,348 (51.48%)	14,273
FY 01-02	<i>BREAKDOWN NOT AVAILABLE</i>		13,394
FY 02-03			13,903

ETHNIC BACKGROUND:

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other	Total
FY '97	137 (48.76%)	103 (36.65%)	36 (12.81%)	5 (1.78%)	0	281
FY '97-'98	183 (55%)	102 (31%)	39 (12%)	7 (2%)	0	331
FY '98-'99	289 (59%)	128 (26%)	43 (9%)	26 (5%)	1 (1%)	487
FY '99-'00	282 (57%)	151 (30%)	34 (7%)	30 (6%)	0	497
FY '00-'01	296 (55.53%)	164 (30.77%)	35 (6.57%)	34 (6.38%)	4 (.75%)	533
FY '01-'02	302 (57.63%)	154 (29.39%)	28 (5.34%)	40 (7.64%)	0	524
FY '02-'03	358 (57.66%)	172 (27.0%)	49 (7.90%)	35 (5.64%)	7 (1.1%)	621
'00-'01 NCASAA SURVEY:	51%	30%	11%	3%	6%	
01-02 NCASAA SURVEY:	54%	26%	11%	3%	6%	

% Comparison Statewide

FY '97-'98	8,684(63.73%)	1,751(12.85%)	616 (4.52%)	1,832 (13.44%)	744(5.46%)	13,627
FY '98-'99	<i>BREAKDOWN NOT AVAILABLE</i>					16,710
FY '99-'00	11,271(69.5%)	2,159 (13.31%)	0	2,242 (13.825)	545(3.37%)	16,217
FY '00-'01	9,671(67.76%)	2,038 (14.28%)	0	2,174 (15.23%)	390(2.73%)	14,273
FY '01-'02	<i>BREAKDOWN NOT AVAILABLE</i>					

AGE CATEGORY:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 18	UNKNOWN
FY '97	137	101	43	0
FY '98	166	127	38	0
FY '99	232 (48%)	187(38%)	68 (14%)	0
FY '00	244 (49%)	183 (37%)	70 (14%)	0
FY 01				
FY 02				
'00-'01 NCASAA SURVEY:	33%	34%	33%	

Breakdown of children in new cases assigned to CASA volunteers during each fiscal year:

GENDER:	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
FY '98	88	77	165
FY '99	76	80	156
FY '00	78	80	158
FY '00-'01	60	86	146
FY '01-'02	67	64	131
FY '02-'03	130	131	261

Ethnicity:	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Biracial	TOTAL
FY '98	125	24	14	2		165
FY '99	106	26	4	19		156
FY '00	88	70	0	0		158
FY '00-'01	81	39	16	6	4	146
FY '01-'02	92	31	0	8		131
FY '02-'03	153	71	21	9	7	261

OCCASA CASELOADS:

FY '02-'03 began the year with **137 cases carrying forward while 147 cases carried forward** at the beginning of FY '01-'02 compared to 153 the previous fiscal year. One hundred and seven (107) new case assignments were made during FY 02-03 in comparison to **48 during FY 01-02 and 67 during FY 00-01**. The increased number of recruits and a decreased number of cases carrying forward made new case assignments possible. **There were 41 CASA cases that were closed, dismissed or transferred compared to 19 last fiscal year;** however, there were another 45??? cases in which CASA withdrew. Case assignments have increased slightly over the past two years, approximately 5-11%. **However, the number of open and pending cases has risen by another 11%, 2235 cases open and pending to 2485, in the last year. Although the number of cases served by OCCASA increases annually, the percent of deprived cases in the county with a CASA volunteer assigned go down or stay static as court caseloads increase.**

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OPEN/PENDING	TOTAL NUMBER DEPRD CASES	TOTAL NUMBER CASA CASES ASSIGNED	% OF CASES SERVED	CASA CASES END.6/30
FY '96	885		152	17%	102
FY '97	1276		157	12%	114
FY '98	1406		179	13%	125
FY '99	1551		191	12%	128
FY '00	1728		192	11%	147

FY '00-'01	2100	214	10%	153
FY '01-'02	2235	201	9%	137
FY '02-'03	2485	244	10%	174

The passage of the 1996 House Bill 2053, known as the "Ryan Luke" Bill and its implementation in 1997 has resulted in increasing caseloads for Juvenile Court dockets. The law requires that abuse cases must be monitored for one year by the court following dismissal. Hence, more cases are carrying over annually and a number of cases scheduled to close end up with new petitions when parents fail to continue compliance of their court ordered treatment plans.

As cases pack court dockets, they prevent the timely processing of cases thereby limiting the time judges have to review each case. OCCASA continues to serve between 9% and 10% of the total open deprived cases. **Children caught in the system are strong support for the continued expansion of the CASA program.**

Based on OCCASA's 2.54 children per case average in FY '02-'03, the 2,485 cases represent approximately 6312 children. The filing of deprived petitions has not grown in proportion to the number of open cases i.e. petitions have only increased 3-5% between 2000 to 2003 compared to a 11% increase in the number of open deprived cases suggesting once again that cases are staying open longer.

Oklahoma County continues to have the largest docket of delinquent and deprived cases in the state with significant differences between the first, second and third positions in the state. Of the total number of confirmed cases of abuse and neglect in the state, **the breakdown of the highest three position's is as follows:**

FY % of	Oklahoma County	Tulsa County	Cleveland County	Subtotal	Statewide
State					
'96 35%	2,465	1,124	525	4,114	11,646
'97 33%	2,452	1,489	608	4,549	13,627
'98 40%	3,514	2,319	807	6,640	16,710
'99 35%	3,189	1,788	776	5,753	16,217
'00 34%	2,786	1,532	602	4,920	14,273
'01 38%	3,072	1,428	598	5,098	13,394
'02	3,328	1,280	668	5,276	13,903

Of significant importance is the fact **three counties, out of 77**, account for over **one-third of the total abuse and neglect cases in the state. Yet**, state funds allocated between the three counties is **less than 25%** of the state's allocated funding for CASA.

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS and Outcomes:

Continued foundation grants to the CJJ and fund raising efforts for CASA programming highlighted Fiscal year 2002-2003.

VOLUNTEER POOL

Last year's goals included developing a volunteer pool of at least 185 volunteers, with 140 active at any given time. OCCASA exceeded expectations by ending the fiscal year **with 207 available volunteers**; however, it was not until June that active numbers approached the active goal of 140. June showed 135 volunteers active. Throughout the year active volunteers (i.e. volunteers assigned to a case) averaged 120 per month. However, this is a formidable increase over FY 01-02 average of 97 active volunteers monthly.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OCCASA SUB-BOARD

The development and implementation of a separate CASA Board was achieved after great deliberation and discussion with both CJJ board members and an outside consultant. Based on the Leadership and Youth Leadership Oklahoma board models, the CJJ board members agreed to adopt a separate sub-board model for OCCASA which was put into effect September 2003. Although the CJJ board will continue to have fiscal responsibility of funds for both boards, the OCCASA board will operate autonomously from programming, board development, and fund raising perspectives.

Not lost in this endeavor, however, is the importance of maintaining current levels of funding from the County, State and various grant funders. Sustaining funding from these sources is critical to the continued success of OCCASA. The support from the Board of County Commissioners afforded through the Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau budget has been a qualifying factor for obtaining numerous federal grants over the years.

FUND RAISING

1. Pulling for Kids

In an unexpected solicitation, Halliburton Energy selected OCCASA to be the recipient of its first-ever Pulling for Kids Sporting Clays Shoot. All proceeds generated from the day's event were donated to OCCASA. Grossing over \$30,000, the Pulling for Kids event, took us one step closer to achieving the necessary dollars to replace salaries under the National CASA Grant which expired June 30, 2004.

2. Light of Hope Campaign:

In its continued show of faith and holiday spirit for the thousands of children who cross our threshold annually, the CJJ and CASA boards supported a mass mailing campaign to purchase Holiday Lights for \$10.00 each and light up the Juvenile Center during the month of December. Additionally, during FY 01-02, OCCASA incorporated a month long auction of holiday reindeer. Reindeer, built by Metro Tech Skills Tech Campus and decorated by local artists, the reindeer auction yielded another \$3800 plus and helped OCCASA and the CJJ meet their goal of doubling prior year's efforts with gross proceeds just over \$20,000.

- 3. Strengthening of the local Kappa Alpha Theta relationship.** Supported by our local alumnae chapter since 1999, OCCASA has been the recipient of increased dollars since 2001 with the adoption of OCCASA under the chapter's three year giving plan in 2002.

VALUE OF SERVICE

Finally, OCCASA **volunteer advocates contributed** an estimated **\$128,962 in time and service to the deprived children of Oklahoma County**. Hours continue to reflect slightly reduced numbers over previous years due to OCCASA's effort to rely more on documented hours. This reduction is in direct correlation to the fact approximately 16-20% of volunteer advocates report monthly.

Based on OCCASA's estimated operating costs of \$309,468 the services provided to the 621 children during FY '03, the average cost per child was \$499 compared to the National average of \$750 per child for Urban programs of similar age ('02 NCASSA Survey.) Last year's cost was \$541 per child.

Program Goals 2003-2004:

1. Maintain significant flow of volunteers for year-round training curriculum.

Objective: Maintain full-time Recruiter position upon the expiration of the National Grant, June 30, 2004. Full-time efforts will continue to focus on volunteer recruitment and raising awareness for the need for volunteer advocates in our community. Measurable elements will include an increase in speaking engagements, press coverage, and of course, increased numbers.

2. Put in place part-time Diversity Recruiter in accordance with National CASA Grant.
3. Increase diversity of volunteer base.

- **Improved diversity of OCCASA's volunteer base. Current numbers reflect that OCCASA'S volunteer base is 92% Caucasian and 8% ethnically and racially diverse while our child clients are 54% Caucasian and 46% children of color. This is a slight decrease in the diversity of OCCASA's volunteer base**
- Reducing volunteer attrition by 50%. 2001 numbers reflect that OCCASA has achieved this goal under its 2000 grant; however, only consistent monitoring under our present structure can determine the validity of this change. While retention of all well-trained and experienced volunteers is critical, **extra emphasis will be placed on retaining volunteers of color.**
- *Increasing the available volunteer pool to each FTE and each .50 FTE to 30-35 and 20, respectively. OCCASA achieved a volunteer pool of over 200 this past year; however, efforts to achieve a **minimum of 140 active volunteers to OCCASA** fell slightly short with an average of 120 active volunteers monthly. Hence, OCCASA's goal remains the active involvement of an average of **140 assigned advocates monthly.***
- **The need still exists to recruit between 50 and 75 new volunteers annually, 20% of whom are of color. The goal of achieving a 20% diversity base among new recruits was set in 02-03 but not achieved. It continues to be a goal under this year's plan.**
- **This would positively impact OCCASA's ability to serve an additional 101-135 children over the 2 year period .**
- Staff development in diversity recruitment and training; volunteer diversity training.
- Develop and offer alternative opportunities within the juvenile system for frustrated or inactive volunteers and prospective volunteers who choose not to complete CASA training.

4. With the help of the part-time Specialty Recruiter, identify local norms and obstacles surrounding OCCASA's efforts to diversify its volunteer base.
5. Improved balance between case manager caseloads.
6. Maintain year-round training curriculum.

Objective: Maintenance of the year-round training curriculum has proven effective in maintaining a steady pool of volunteers for assignment. Critical to the success of this type of curriculum is the security of a full-time Training Coordinator.

7. Continued development of the new CASA Board, sub-board to the Citizens for Juvenile Justice.

Objective: Continue to delineate roles and responsibilities of the two boards. Develop board officers and bylaws, along with the necessary committees to assist in the financial development, marketing, and programming of the OCCASA. This should allow the CASA Program flexibility for increased foundation funding not currently available due to the current relationship with its umbrella agency as well as maintain a supportive relationship with the County and the Juvenile Bureau.

FINANCES:

Oklahoma County and the Bureau donate goods and services to OCCASA in the form of office space, phones, some office supplies, postage, plus some printing and travel expenses. These funds, however inadequate, are stable and consistent in their supply. Future replacement funds include looking to increased county and legislative appropriations. The County continues where and when it can to support positions and office needs vital to OCCASA's daily operations.

While goals included the addition of a silent auction and a matching grant, the matching grant was not available. Fortunately, Oklahoma County citizens responded favorably to both the mail campaign and the auction, allowing OCCASA to almost double 2001's efforts. For the second year in its history, the Juvenile Center and the Emergency Shelter next door reflected the joy and hope of the season with lights and holiday decorations. A Corporate sponsored mass mailing campaign and month long silent auction of holiday reindeer generated over \$20,000 gross.

VOCA, foundation grants and the County have supplemented expiring grant funds in the past. All previously funded grant positions remain intact. The CASA Director plays a vital role in fundraising, writing all grant proposals and coordinating many of the fundraising activities. The CJJ has always supported fund raising efforts through committee participation, financially, and/or in-kind contributions.

Grant and annual supporters include but are not limited to:

- State Funding: appropriation \$25,953;
- County funds are both in-kind and financial for an estimated \$178,614;
- Kappa Alpha Theta contribution: \$5,000 in 2002;
- Friends of CASA – CASA Challenge \$ 1000 – 1500 annually;
- "Kids for Kids" Christmas Card Program: \$400 - \$600 plus annually;
- Victims of Crime Grant \$56,901 in 2002;
- Foundation Awards: \$14,000 in 2002;
- National CASA Grant FY 2002 through FY 2004: \$78,000;
- Corporate, civic and individual sponsors over \$500 included: Chesapeake Energy, Halliburton, Crowe and Dunlevy, Fellers, Snider, et al, Downtown Kiwanis Club, The Oklahoman, Metro Tech Skills Tech Campus, OG&E, Devon Energy Corp., Samson, SPM Control, Inc., XTO Energy, Inc., Clayton and Marnie Taylor, The GHK Company, LLC, Norton Proppants, Santrol, Quality Tubing and Downhole Wireless Specialists, Grace Enterprise and Gwen Parks.

Finally, the pursuit of United Way funding remains on the table for consideration. Due to OCCASA's present fund raising schedule, significant thought must be given to this endeavor. United Way requirements would mandate transitioning the timelines on present fund raisers so as to not conflict with the fund raising black out period imposed on participating agencies. While it is not impossible, it would require at least a two year transition period so as to not lose the momentum created with current campaigns.